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593 462 the best of his ability. Though he can make what disposal he will of the funds earned by the labor of the group, his wife and children can expect as of right that he shall make it for the family as a whole in which each member receives his share. For the work of his wife is complementary to his, and in its own sphere of as great importance to the livelihood and the organization of the family unit. While he may demand and expect of his wife that she fulfill her household duties, so may she demand and expect that he fulfill his in the management and working of the farm and in providing for herself and the children.

593 As regards income, all money derived from the sale of eggs and butter, the chief concern of the women beyond the house itself, belongs to her to dispose of as she sees fit. Yet the fruits of her labors are also subject to the needs of the family unit, husband and children.

462 593 The division of labor between the sexes arises within a field of larger interests and obligations. It is part of the behavior expected reciprocally of husband and wife. It is a functional element of their relationship within the family.

868 The training each sex receives from childhood in farm work reflects this fact. Each learns his or her part in farm economy, not as a vocational preparation but as a making ready for marriage. The boy acquires his man's skills and techniques for the farm and farm family he may head himself some day; the girl learns the woman's role as an integral part of her future state of wife and mother. Each learns to expect of the other not only the loving consideration of husband or wife but the proper skills in farm economy.

462 626 ● 183 Among the small farmers this dichotomy of tasks assigned to the sexes in the economy of the farm family is more even than the reciprocal duties of husband and wife, father and mother. It is also an integral part of the personalities of all men and women of the peasant's own kind. One can get many expressions of attitude of this sort. They show that

the division of labor between males and females is regarded as corresponding to the natural propensities of the two sexes. That a man should concern himself with a woman's work, such as the sale of eggs or the making of butter, is the subject of derisive laughter, while a woman's smaller hands make it "natural" for her to be a better hand at milking the cows.

Even when the communal labor of the family is demanded and women take their place in bog, garden, and meadow, a definite role is assigned them. Usually it is the lighter tasks which are known as women's work. There is no formal taboo confining a woman to women's work. Heavy work is merely felt to be a hardship upon her. At the potato planting the women do the arduous work of planting the sprouts which they have prepared, bending over to put them into the ridges prepared by the men. They do their share, if necessary, of cultivating, but they are not generally accustomed to the spade, which like the plough, the harrow, the mower, scythe, and turf "slan" is regarded as a masculine implement. At the potato lifting they go along behind the man who turns the potatoes out of the ridge with spade and plough, and pick them up. At the haymaking, the pitching, raking, and some of the building of the haycocks are left to them. But the mowing, especially where it involves the horse-drawn mowing machine, and the building of the rick in the haggard, are masculine skills. In all cases of field work of this sort the role of the woman is usually auxiliary. The same holds in turf cutting. The men do the actual cutting in the bog trenches, while the women knead the peat into briquets and pile it for drying.

The many attitudes and beliefs which surround this type of division of labor illustrate again the socially determined character of the distinctions and their genesis in the intersexual relationship. Just as the man's work is the harder, the more various, and the wider in scope, so the attitudes express a greater valuation of the men's work within the

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241 462 626 183 461 limits of the restriction. Thus on several occasions the authors have heard men admonish a woman for interruption with such phrases as: "Woman, be silent while we [men] are talking about ploughing." Ridicule and laughter greet suggestions that either sex busy itself with the work of the other, though in the case of a woman doing a man's work some of the praise bestowed upon surprising successes meets her if she does it well. There is also an entire body of popular belief and superstition surrounding the dichotomy in farm labor.

462 593 183 626 These beliefs and attitudes serve to uphold the conventional division and to evaluate the necessary behavioral specialization which is basic to the interrelationships within the farm family. The connection between family status and labor performed brings about an identification between them. Ridicule and graver charges of unmanliness and unwomanliness can be brought to reaffirm the conventions against the offender in either sphere. Just as in the noneconomic life of the family, behavior is enjoined upon members on the basis of sex, so, when the group acts in economic enterprise, different but complementary roles become conventional for each sex. The interesting point is the identification. For the farm family, farm work is as much a family matter as is sharing the same table.

462 593 561 Within the framework of the division of labor on the basis of sex, there is another just as great division on the basis of age differences. Though all the males of the farm family share the work which is regarded as the masculine province, there can be immediately observed great differences in the practice of the masculine technique by the male family members; the same can be observed in the feminine province.

These further divisions of tasks likewise reflect family status. They are part of the behavior expected of the farmer as a family member, and take their form in the complex of

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members of the household, we are forced to postulate the sacred and semireligious nature of the attitudes surrounding the old couple and identifying them with the forces of the dead and the symbolic unity of the family, past and present.

The match is a mechanism, from one point of view, for preservation of family unity through the sequence of the generations. The dominant interest of the old couple in the "new woman" brings this point out most forcefully. They are vitally concerned in providing heirs for the line. Consequently their evaluation of the "new woman" is made upon the score of her fertility. Their desire is as strong as hers. She must have children.

The chief reflection of this fact is not to be found in economic expressions, frequent as they are. Children mean more hands for the working corporation. The farmers express their desire for them once again in terms of "help." But help might be obtained in other ways, for it can be hired. Rather it is the continuity of the human nexus which is the true goal. The fact that much of the relationship between the old couple and the "new woman" is built around her childbearing illustrates where the motivating interest lies.

The old couple appraise their daughter-in-law accordingly. The first year of the girl's new position is a time of apprenticeship. Work is light. Pregnancy is her major duty. All during her childbearing years the old woman aids her and helps her, praising her in terms of her increase and showing as great an interest in the arriving children as the mother. One countryman puts it as follows:

> This [a smooth relationship between the old couple and the new woman] carries on for seven or eight months, but, if then the old people do not see evidence of increase of young, then the boy's father's people get angry and abuse her, but if they do, they do not let her do any work and are so proud.

Family and community alike support them in their attitude. A woman could say bitterly, for she was childless:

> No matter how much money you have and how good-looking you are, if you don't have children, you're no good. But if you're ugly as the worst and have children you are all right.

The husband has every right to express his displeasure at his wife's barrenness. To have no children is a source of shame to him and a terrible disappointment in his desire to continue his line upon the farm. One woman put it:

> The man wants children because he is afraid others will tell him he is no good if he hasn't any. Children are the curse of the country, especially if you haven't any.

In the country districts they say that he may beat her and in their graphic phrase "bounce a boot off her now and then for it." Country belief still regards the woman as the offending partner in a childless marriage. Near Inagh one farmer, a returned Yankee, was regarded as an anomaly because, though childless, he treated his wife just as well as though she had many and did not get angry when he was twitted on his lack of an heir. They explained it by saying that he "knew it was his own fault."

The day of the "country divorce," as the farmers call it, is rapidly passing. In the old days, they say, a man might send a barren wife back to her parents, though Catholic law forbade him to marry again. There are cases which illustrate that the custom survives in altered form. They are particularly revealing in our analysis of the desire to preserve the family unity and its identification with farm and household through the generations. Here the brothers act, sociologically, as a single individual in order to insure the desired continuity. For instance, in one case, a middling farmer of Corrofin, childless after several years, got a country divorce. He gave the land thereafter to his brother in return for a thousand pounds, which the brother had inherited in lieu

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Even where matches are made between strangers, some kind of sexual attraction is not to be neglected, and local custom provides for a brief introduction and a setting for courtship. Several cases came to the authors' notice in which advantageous matches were broken off when either boy or girl expressed distaste for his or her prospective partner, usually when confronted with him or her at the preliminary festivities of the country marriage. Other cases again came to their notice in which a shy suitor could be galvanized into a final decision to take matters into his own hands and press a suit, when his family began to cast around for a match for him elsewhere. Matchmaking was, in fact, far from presenting a scene of "loveless" marriages. The match is a convention like any other. For those who are trained in it, it provides occasion for arousing sexual interest and marital aspirations in young couples quite in the manner of "falling in love" in communities where courtship is more immediately a matter of personal initiative.

And, like any other convention, the match could also come to cloak another situation. The match made by the contracting families is the ideal kind of marriage, for the reasons we have discussed. But it does not necessarily imply any one kind of courtship. In many instances a couple who made their own decision had a match made for them. Even in the case of "runaways," as elopements are called, the boy and girl could often be brought back and a match made for them. \nd lastly, as a way of establishing respectability and providing for the movement of the re-formation of the family, even those cases of marriage necessitated by premarital pregnancy could be fitted into the dominant convention.

Thus the forms of courtship and the development of pairings among the population of boys and girls of the country communities must all be understood, even in their most unusual forms, in terms of the dominant pattern of the

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581 familistic system and the kind of marriage it entails in rural
183 Ireland. The country people feel this. Their attitudes
577 identify the convention with the whole code of morality and folkways of their own class and kind.

183 They equate any departure from the accepted norm as a
577 sin, a lack of religion. They bring the whole weight of all
673 their sanctions and values to bear upon it. They make the ultimate identification between their own norms and the only right conduct, particularly in this matter so central to the rural familistic system. This final attitude was often addressed to the observers, particularly, but there is reason to believe that it is as often expressed among the country people themselves. In discussions of immorality, illegitimacy, premarital intercourse, the question would arise: Would you believe such a thing could happen in Ireland? In such countries as England and America well it might, for there, the country people hear, the boys and girls just take a liking for one another and go off and marry and "never mind the money." And we remember that in this case the "money" means the re-formation of the entire two families as well.

Even those cases which meet condemnation are likewise often thought to have to do with the dominant pattern. Whether or not the suspicions of the country people are correct, the authors do not know. But they were struck with the fact that so very often in discussions of cases of immorality and unethical sexual conduct the country people made no recourse to concepts of search for pleasure or even of the overpowering force of emotion as explanations of the condemned conduct. Both explanations were to be heard in other classes. Rather, the country people insisted upon looking for a motive in terms of the system of organizing human relations which they understood. The culprits, young "bucks," tried deliberately in such cases to impregnate the girls and force marriages. They were motivated

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by greed for land and dowries. Sex without familism seemed beyond the country people's imagination.

But the last statement must be qualified in a definite direction. It is only for themselves that they seemed to be unable or, better, unwilling to imagine a sexuality without familism. Other patterns of sexual behavior they see and have heard of, but these are immoral and unworthy ways of doing things and acting, departures from the right and normal, sometimes disgusting, sometimes ludicrous, and sometimes mysterious. In any event they are marks of standards of a lower class and lesser dignity and respectability than that of the farmers. They are to be repudiated not only for their lack of common sense but for supernatural reasons as well.

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Thus the authors heard several instances in which bad luck attended the departure from the usual familistic norm. There was a feeling, sometimes overtly expressed, that at any one time there should be only one sexually active procreant couple in a household. Young and old could well be part of the household in any numbers, but there should be only one adult married couple under one roof. Any other arrangement brought its own punishment and ill luck.

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But more often there was identification between the expression of sexual impulse outside the familistic pattern and the debased conduct of the lower ranks of the landless and disreputable of the countryside, the laborers of the towns, the runaways, remnants of broken households. Or else the small farmers put the onus of guilt on other regions "more backward" than their own. At the most, wrong conduct might be the result of some occult compelling force strong enough to break through all sense and caution. The authors were struck with the countryside's version of love charms. In accounts of love charms and love magic, proof of their existence and efficacy was always to be found in the

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183 577 832 otherwise unaccountable cases in which a man or woman abondoned farm and fortune and the favor of friends for a sexual attraction. How else to explain, for instance, an old man's senile infatuation, a young boy's indiscourageable devotion to an older woman who could bring him nothing?

583 A word must be said here of the other ways of bringing about marriage than the formal process of family matchmaking. In the last century, to judge from the accounts of the old people, and to follow the testimony of novelists on Irish life, a stage-managed elopement was often resorted to. It was a semi-respectable kind of marriage. The swain and his friends kidnapped the bride out through the window in the night. They took her away from her father's house to the house of an uncle or other relative of the young man's. There dancing and general jollity reigned, and the young couple were feted. Very often all parties seem to have connived at the result. On other occasions, the elopment was obviously designed to bring about a match to which parents objected or to force parents to a decision. Staged elopements of this kind seem now to have died out in Clare, or at least to be rather infrequent. But the difference between this and a true runaway is slight. In the latter case the young couple take matters into their own hands entirely. Throughout the years many couples have eloped, run off to towns and to emigrate without parental blessing. Others have done likewise and returned to get their portions and a delayed parental sanction. Nevertheless one can see that all these forms are mere modifications upon the dominant convention.

583 581 They too must lead into the familistic pattern. A match must be made, or at least fortunes given and provision for family re-formation made. In cases of premarital pregnancy, the match may be forced or hastened, but it is nonetheless the final and respectable resolution.

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Even in cases of illegitimacy, if the mother comes to marry another man than her child's father, a match may sometimes save the day. It serves the social purposes and repairs the damage, though it removes none of the stain upon one's local reputation. In spite of the strictness of country standards, many small farmers have married "poor, unfortunate girls" of this kind, without irreparable loss of respectability. Yet even then the attitude of the community fits the familistic norm. Such cases are felt to be very unusual and special departures from custom. They are matters for some surprise and congratulation.

The moral standards of the countryside involve a most strict control of the young people in sexual matters. Premarital virginity is the ideal. It is a double standard, of course. The young lads are not, or were not until recently, expected to be so pure as the girls.

The sexual urges of the older people are deemed adequately satisfied in marriage. Adultery very seldom seems to come into the reckoning of the small farmers. This is part of the equation of sexual appetite and familistic aspirations. The country people know something of town prostitutes and have heard of occasional marital lapses in the countryside as well. But these matters are not of great interest. The incidents, as far as one can judge, are of infrequent occurrence. Marital fidelity is not only the ideal; it seems to be the fact as well. It seems even to be taken for granted, and any other course felt inconceivable.

Thus we must look to the relations among the unmarried young couples to see the chief point of pressure in the rural system of values. That is the area in which there is nearly all the smoke and not a little fire.

Although premarital virginity and complete abstinence from any kind of sexual activity is the ideal for the young, local custom emphasizes marriage all the while. Local dances and other festivities are the chief times of meeting

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That was the way with the girl who married Willie Meaney[3] and he thought to get the money, but the parents said let her go. Now they are in Ennis and she never got anything. The same way with the two who married the Shaughnessy girls. They thought they would get something but they didn't get a thing. Would you believe that? America is not the only place where things like that happen. The people have crosses to bear. Every year we have a talk from the priest about the dances. He says the dances are all right but it is the going home that is bad. There is always a laugh when he says that. Then some of the parents get worried and they won't let their daughters go to a dance for a month or so, and they forget about it after that.

The status of boy and girl involves a "repression" of sexual impulse, virginity, and chastity of thought and expression, but custom and the attitudes of the older people provide a constant stimulation of sexual interest in the direction of the familistic system. The status of boy and girl thus involves a definite kind of sexual organization, based directly upon social relationships.

Nowhere is this better to be seen than in the case of the young woman's "character." Here the Church fathers and the country people seem to have attained quite a unanimity. Sexual orientation is inseparable from social role. Sexual repute and status are identical. The authors do not say this identification is unique. They do not know its historical origins. But they do wish to point out its function in this setting: The young woman's "character" is her full status as a social being because the familistic system is such that sexual activity, no less than economic, is completely integrated with one's role in social life. Consequently her sexual conduct is no concern of hers alone.

In the relationships in family and community in which the young girls of the countryside find their roles, any departure from the norm of conduct on their part is cause for

[3] Names of persons and smaller places in this and subsequent quotations are, of course, fictitious and refer to no actual persons or places of such names.

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834 violent disturbance in the relations uniting others to themselves and to one another. To "destroy a girl's character" in the countryside is to upset the pattern of family and community life by overthrowing the possibility of an orderly change in farm succession. Much more than a shooting or a fight, a sexual irregularity, which cannot be righted in a match, is capable of destroying the intricate mutual obligations and expectancies of rural familism.

For the family whose "name" is "destroyed" and whose hopes of orderly re-formation are upset, two courses are open. One is to patch up a compromise, to accept the match forced upon them. The other is to expel the offenders bodily. Community feeling gives full support. In either case the girl concerned can no longer hope for full status. If the match is made or another husband found to father a child, time may right matters and give her full adult status as a farm wife and mother. Her failure as a girl may be forgotten, but it was a failure still. Otherwise there is little further to do but suffer expulsion. Emigration has been the refuge till recently.

836 The country people's attitudes toward illegitimacy and premarital intercourse, one and the same to them, reflect well the disturbances they occasion. In discussing a local case, one woman could voice the community's opinion in the following general terms:

> A young lady with a good fortune even, she couldn't get any man because her character is broken. Unless maybe he is very low. And so she usually goes to America and passes for a maiden. Everyone knows the father of the child but, if he has a good farm of land, no one would say anything, but he would be unlucky and have no family. He would get another woman [a wife, that is] with no bother. The baby might be sent to a home. And after a time they bring it home as a cousin.

836 But it is not always that the boys are treated so leniently, and they, too, must emigrate, driven off by public censure.

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834 522 587 laughter is best explained as playful censure. For very real censure often breaks out against such a person. It is particularly likely to break out into overt punitive action in cases where old farmers threaten the expectations of their heirs by taking young women as second wives. In fact, the one kind of man or woman of considerable age who does not command respect is this. The countryside finds endless amusement in the theme of May and November. Naturally the matchmaking system does lend itself fairly well to matings between oldish men and young women, since ownership of a farm is the basis for a match.

581 554 ●183 The most interesting point of inquiry, then, may well be the connection between the sexual status of the family members, as we have described it here, and the standing of the family. The sexual status of the members is a reflection of their capacity for carrying alliance among the other families of the countryside. Can we draw, therefore, a connection between rural familistic norms about sexual behavior and the class structure of the rural community?

We know already that marriage in rural Ireland yields us one clue to the connection. At matchmaking the negotiations between the contracting parties concern the relative standing of each. That standing is at stake. The equivalence of dowry and land are arrived at through a careful enumeration of all the past history and the present material substance of the contracting families. The location of the farm, its livestock, its soil, the reputation and ancestry of the family, all these are compared. Backward places, we remember, do not grow big fortunes. Neither do many other kinds of persons and places.

We are dealing here of course only with one broad class, the country people. Yet within the boundaries of rural life there is much to be learned of the country people's treatment of relative prestige and standing among themselves. There are many behaviors in the activity of the countryside

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which express attitudes of social stratification. These do not only express the differences between the country people and outsiders from other classes beyond the confines of the local districts; they have much to do with the intimate details of personal relations in daily life among the small farmers as well. Intimate as they may be, however, these behaviors are nonetheless powerful. Like so much else in rural life, they find their chief expression and their most complete organization around marriage and matchmaking in country custom. In that they are directly a part of the organization of sexual conduct and attitudes among the small farmers.

From this fact springs the seeming paradox of Irish rural life, already mentioned. A social system centering so strongly round the institution of the family condemns a large proportion of its members to celibacy and long-preserved virginity. The explanation lies in the very paradox. Only through marriage does one attain full stature and one's family take its full place in the interlocking alliances of extended kindreds in the countryside. Failure to make a match is not only failure to fulfill one's own destiny of mating and procreating; it is also, as we have seen, failure to provide for the dispersal and re-formation of one's group. It is also, as we shall see, failure to maintain or establish the alliances making status among one's peers.

Thus it is the identification of sexual behavior with familistic role on the one hand and attainment of status on the other that makes the problems of marriage and sex of such great social and emotional importance.

Their importance is both individual and social. Individually, the powerful dispositions and sentiments concerned give a deep-seated biological and physiological basis to the institutional imperatives and the behavioral norms learned in experience of human relations. Socially, the fact that such a basis can be relied upon gives added strength to the attitudes evoked in support of the social institutions of the

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countryside and an added, automatic sanction to the enforcement, through public and official channels, of the accepted behaviors. In this manner, based upon and reinforced by such deep-rooted automatic reactions of individual conscience, the canons of morality, custom, personal habit, religious teaching, and social sanction form a whole piece all together. To hazard a comparison, let us select other central nexuses of custom, attitude, and emotion, among other peoples. By the process described, sexual morality becomes to Irish society, from the country people with whom we are dealing upward through other classes of society, what respect for law is to English society, what filial piety once was to Chinese society.

Let us now see how this mutual incorporation of sexual, marital, and stratificational standards works out in the experience of the countryside.

In the system of relations we have described, the fate of persons at the hands of their fellows and the repute they bear among them are closely connected. Local standing is, of course, a product of values arising in local experience. Consequently when we come upon the comedies and tragedies of life within a specific community, and hear described by the people themselves the course of events through which these little dramas took place and the impression they made upon the witnesses, we are close to observation of the experience which builds a scale of values and the place of individuals in it. The problem of local repute and public opinion can be reviewed in the light of concrete events and referred to actual relationships built out of behavior.

Thus one can come to see these petty events not merely as personal histories but also as functions of the patterns of organization we have been detailing.

If then we should take up the life of a local community and its inhabitants and search it through for its family histories of recent years, we should lay bare the roots of local

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values. Such a study was made in one community studied. Family histories since the famine times were secured from two hundred families of a Clare parish. The histories included farms owned or rented, worked, subdivided, added or lost, in each generation since pre-famine days; names, numbers, sexes, and life-sketches of family members of each generation; occupations of each person not taking to farming; emigrations and the destination of the emigrants in each generation; marriages made in each generation, according to farms married into, occupations of husbands and fathers-in-law, and size of dowry. Much of this material was statistical in form, but along with it a considerable amount of anecdotal material was gathered, describing in detail many local incidents. This information is out of place here; and it will be reported elsewhere. But certain conclusions of relevance to the problem of understanding the social role of marital alliances in the countryside are of importance for the present discussion. 183 ● 581 554

The first of these conclusions concerns the mechanism by which families without farms or with very small and "backward" ones were forced to extinction through celibacy. The second of these conclusions illustrates the means by which alliances made through the matchmaking mechanism provided a channel of upward social movement and incidentally a path of recruitment of the successful children of farmers in the "bad" or poorer lands into the ranks of those of the "good" or better lands.

The first conclusion illustrated by the material of this survey of family histories is one we have already met. Failure to make marital alliances led to failure of family reformation and hence either to celibacy for all the children or to emigration on the part of the whole generation. In the words of the countryside, if a family could find no one with whom to marry "they died out of it."

Even so broad a question as the disappearance of the class

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Even so broad A question as the disappearance of the class
183 of artisans in the countryside comes, for its explanation,
581 under this conclusion. It cannot be understood except in
554 terms of responses to values determined in the relations of familism. The social mechanism by which the local artisans have disappeared – whatever the historic and economic occasion of their fate in the industrial revolution and its aftermath – is something specific to the system of social organization we have described.

The few local artisans who survive today were once members of a numerous group. In the days before railroads and the growth of towns, each local community had its local artisans. Tailors, weavers, carpenters, shoemakers, and smiths followed their lifelong trades and supplied local needs. Their skills descended, like the farmer's farm, from father to son; the trade was "in their blood." Their surplus children have had to disperse to the towns and in emigration. For theirs, too, is a familistic world.

Unless the artisans in the countryside marry within their own fast-diminishing numbers, they, too, must have land and fortune. If they do not get it, they must either marry one of their own kind or stay celibate. Today one finds many survivors of this local class of craftsmen scattered here and there in the countryside. The mere memory of their trade may be all that remains to distinguish them from petty cotters. In the majority of cases they have not married. If they have, without a fortune to transmit, they can find no wives and husbands for their children. Thus the family "dies out of it." Neither alliance nor continuance can be theirs.

The mechanism by which this extinction is brought about is clear enough. Occupational names have emotional significance far beyond their reference to skill and economic
183 function. They are symbols evocative of social stratification,
581 among the small farmers as no less elsewhere.
554 In disputes even within a family, angry reference to ties

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outside the family may well be a method of attack. Where, as here, such ties are a matter of one's "blood," the attack is direct and personal. One's status is part of one's person. How close a part it is can well be seen in the quotation of one farmer's account of transition in family relations at the match:

> If the old people don't like the girl, then the mother and the father go to their room and fight with her every day; and if she has low blood in her, they will take her to task for it, if she has weaver, tinker, or tailor blood. If they don't like her they will not work like they used, but go out on *cuaird* and spread the bad news about her.

The familistic outlook gives all this kind of evocation and reference the character of genealogical commentary. Everything one does or is can be referred to one's "blood." Heredity is the explanation of success or failure, high position or low estate. Since one's heredity includes the occupational and other status of one's forbears and the whole gamut of relations which marked their place in the community, a continuity is preserved between the present and the past which defines one fully as a member of one's group.

Consequently, the instances of failure to find wives and husbands, the instances of courtships opposed by parental and other pressures, the instances of elopements ending in emigration, the instances of families of brothers and sisters who stuck together celibate until old age, are far oftener examples of the force of failure to find a mate of acceptable status than of any other cause. The organization of sexual behavior in the countryside is inseparable from that of the stratification of the community itself.

The second interesting point, again one in which the examination of family histories led to an illumination of the connection between the patterns of sexual organization and those of small farmer familism, is in a sense the reverse of the coin.

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183 581 554 In these histories, when a countrywoman explained that she or someone she knew had married from bad land into good, or paid a larger dowry than she might have, had she stayed in her own townland, she referred to a movement that was quite readily discernible in her parish. She had experienced, and took pride in, a natural wedding of desire and ambition, which combined, for her as an individual, the instincts of a woman to be wife and mother and the demands of her group's advancement in the systems of familist alliances that made up her community. This was the individual side of the matter. Many indeed were the farmers and their wives who were careful to specify to us how successful a match had been in carrying a larger-than-might-be dowry to better land. One might grumble perhaps about one's lot, if there were anything to grumble over, but in such a case one might be proud that one had assured one's children of a better farm and a better standing than one's own.

166 581 But there was a social side of the matter which showed that this ambition was not a merely personal thing. For in the parish in which we gathered detailed information an interesting statistical movement could be seen. This movement was reflected in the geography of the district.

Marriages since 1864 in this parish have shown a tendency to move brides from the westward out of the poorer lands eastward toward richer farms. The parish happens to lie between higher, poorer soil to the westward and a more fertile area to the east. One must know the local topography and the fertility of the soil to understand the details of the movement. But its over-all tendency is statistically clear. None of the marriages among small farmers and their fellows have taken place (if they took place in the County at all) beyond a six-mile range of distance between the farm married-out-of and the farm married-into. In all cases the movement is small. Yet, small as it is, it shows a distinct tendency. In general, the higher and more westerly town-

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Thus, cures of cattle and human beings, as well, bring in the fairy-lore. The good people may take anything from hens to men and women. When they mysteriously sap the strength of a man or woman, leaving him or her sick or weak and listless, he or she is little recognizable as the strong helper and friend of former years. The vitality has gone out of him or her. The country-people can believe that 'they' have spirited away the real person and left in his place "some spent old man that they had with them for a long time". The real person is 'away'. Cures, both religious and responding to the fairy-cult, must bring him back. That does not mean that they do not recognize what we might call natural sickness or disease; they do, only too well, from bitter experience. It means only that they have an explanation for it that infuses it with the associations they have about their belief.

For the belief in changelings, about which you all have heard a great deal, has its root in the fairies' 'taking'. In fact, it is sometimes said, as it was to Lady Gregory, that "all persons who die are taken, except the old people". Only for them is death the natural course of events; all others have fallen prematurely into the power of the supernatural forces.

Thus we can see that the countryman's fairy belief is not entirely a catalogue of wonders, by any means. Nearly all the disturbances of his interests and sentiments can be brought into the scope

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of an emotionally charged explanatory scheme. The trouble overtaking them becomes interpretable for him; he knows what has happened and is in some measure ready to take the necessary steps. The fate of his goods and his fellows affects him vitally, it upsets the attachments he feels. But belief is common property; it is given to him and held for him by that community of his fellows of which he is a part. It is a socially held ideology to which he gives credence and in which he is dependent upon his fellows for ways and means, for corroboration, for solace.

But this ideology is much more than a mere interpretative device. Certain anthropologists have tried to see in magic and magic belief a groping, primitive science; but the concept has failed them if pressed very far. For the fairy faith enforces definite behaviour upon the countryman; it lays down rites and practices which he must perform. If he is to recover his goods that have been taken, restore his threatened animals, friends or children, he must follow a definite course. That course is laid down for him again by his community of belief and habit.

If we examine the course he must adopt to combat ill-luck and disaster, we see a new incorporation into belief of the things he values. In cures, nostrums, and other means of combating evil, the goods upon which he and his fellows are dependent and to which they are attached are once more

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Here then one can see a new kind of incorporation of the values of the countryman's life into belief. The goods round which his interests are centred come to be either beneficial or dangerous to the group to which he belongs, depending upon their connection with it in the critical situations which threaten disease and disaster. Ordinarily, there is nothing supernatural or dangerous about an egg or a hazel-stick, to the countryman. But in these special situations, in which tradition comes to his rescue, they take on a wholly different character. Thus we have the seemingly paradoxical case that the things of greatest 'power' are not by any means always the wondrous, unusual, and fearsome things, but the homely articles of use and familiar associations. Iron cures, but iron is not mysterious. An egg becomes a sign of witchcraft; a pinch of salt protects one against evil; but neither are fearsome things in themselves. Yet in critical circumstances they have the power to heal, to hurt, to cure, to destroy.

For what the countryman's belief is doing for him is something belief always seems destined to do, wherever it is found. Tradition is bearing upon him to keep alive and organize the regard his group must feel for the codes of conduct and the objects of use by which it lives. Belief focuses his attention and his emotions upon them. It gives sanctity to his conventions, his needs, and his goods. It infuses them with emotional associations far beyond

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183 their normal capacity to carry sentiment. It gives them symbolic form.

In this way it holds before him, in emotion, in ritual act, in hope of cure, and defence against evil, the important place they have in the social life upon which he is dependent in habit and sentiment. It throws him back upon the secure and stable order of ordinary, traditional life.

In this fact lies the strength of folk-belief. But you may ask, how can this be? How does a belief in the curative powers of an object both throw him back upon his social habit in such a way as to secure him emotionally in it, and effect the purpose of the cure?

The answer lies in the part established association plays in psychological balance. The cures restore; they provide a form of action in which the countryman can regain an emotional equilibrium. The hazel-stick is his sure and habitual means of driving cattle; the egg is his tried staple of diet; iron is his old friend in tools and implements. They all figure in his own habit and in that of his group's life; they are all tried and true associations of his normal security. He sees them as more than mere unrelated things; he sees them as vital parts of his normal security.

Then, when disease and death stalk his possessions and his friends, and threaten him in his regard for them, the countryman makes his appeal to the tried and true. If a cow is sick, he may well try

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castor-oil first, for he is a rational man. But if castor-oil is unavailing, then other means can be tried. He seizes upon a symbol of normal associations and habitual undisturbed security. The means he adopts restores not the cow so much as it does the peace of mind of him who uses it.

And the belief he holds makes a logical synthesis between this act and the cause of his disturbance. It fits them both into a symbolic order above and beyond, yet closely bound up with, the order of his own life. Put into words, this synthesis takes causal form. "There is great power in a hazèl-stick", he says. "It drives 'them' away." And the statement is perfectly true, in the logic of emotions.

In some such way as this, ever broader areas of his associations with normal social life are given 'power'. They are incorporated into belief and wield the same forces of restoring and upsetting that life as do the good people, whose attributes they become. Events, personalities, landmarks, are brought into this order, in one way or another. Nearly everything here below comes to be projected, in imagination traditionally refurbished, into the other world of awe and wonder and mysterious 'power'. The countryman relates himself to the things so projected through their place in his belief; he knows what to do about them and finds his regard for them fashioned in the common folk faith.

The fairy-belief becomes a world-view, a *Welt-*

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anschauung, in which all experience has a place in the logic of emotional associations. Thus one old fellow summed up a discussion of the sea creatures which still haunt the western coasts of Ireland: "Everything that does be on the land is in the sea, too, if we could see them". This world-view incorporates the world into the life the countryman follows and knows. To the same old fellow, winds along the Clare and Galway border that separates Munster and Connaught provinces could appear as the battles of fairy hosts, for do not men today still remember human battles and still taunt the men of the other province in joke and banter? The rustle of a breeze and the flitting of bats in a ruin where men lived and died is not mere noise; it is still part of human life. One old fellow described to me the experience of 'them' that he got at close quarters, when he lived near the ruin of Ballyvaughan workhouse:

"They were so plentiful there that everybody living round it and myself got so used to them that we wouldn't mind them at all. The place is full of them and everywhere you go there is a door and long windows in the cowl, and you hear them going in and out. There was a great lot of people died in it long ago in the bad times. They are in every room and you hear them on all sides of you. I got so used to it, I never minded them at all, but I heard them every day."

The great cliffs of Moher on the Clare coast are

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a landmark notable enough for many a legend, but the tales of it that best survive are those that relate it to the life of the present and express in the fairy-belief its danger to human life and property. "There's somebody lost," I was told, "off every bit of the cliffs. In the old days the men used to go down often [for wood and salvage]. They used to go down on their own ropes. . . . There was a fellow over in Liscannor who would go down at any time of day or night. He used to go down for lost sheep or lambs. One day a child fell off Aillena-searrach and he went down for the body . . . but when he came up he said he'd never go down again because every rock down below was covered with people sitting on it. People out of the sea they were. . . . Two little girls were lost looking for flowers the fairies put there to grow. The flowers aren't there at all, but are put there just to draw people over the cliffs."

Thus belief and rite in folklore conspire to a common end. They provide the countryman with a world-view in which his regard for things and scenes and events is charged with the emotional forces necessary in his social life.

But as we have seen again and again throughout our whole discussion, the sentiments he holds are organized first and foremost round his fellows: the members of his family, household, kindred, and the community. It is toward them that his habit is fashioned and in his relation to them that his social

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order takes its form. Consequently, we should expect fairy-belief and rite to symbolize the regard he has for his fellows even more strongly than that he holds to the non-human associations of his life.

The expectation is amply borne out. Fairy-belief is first and foremost a symbolism of social life. In the logic of emotional identifications, it organizes, directs, and controls the feelings of human beings for their fellows.

Thus fairy power and dangerous influence are strongest at times when the interest of human beings in their fellows is strongest. With every change overtaking the individual in his course through life among his fellows, the supernatural world steps in. At such times as birth, growing-up, marriage, becoming a parent, growing old and dying, belief catches the countryman in a web of precautions and reminders which signalize forcefully the importance of the change. For example, the birth of a child is not just another event in nature. It is a change of vital importance to the family group, and indirectly to the community. It is cause for rejoicing and congratulation, but it is cause, too, for resolve and determination in the face of new duties. It brings a new orientation in the lives of those who welcome the newcomer. Their relations to one another undergo development; they must henceforth learn new ways which include the newcomer and which prepare a place for him in the life of his fellows.

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Consequently, rural ceremony signalizes the event. Custom brings together those concerned for rejoicing, for recognition of the place of the newcomer in the group, for an expression of the sentiments that unite them all. The rural 'christening' is no mere idle jollification; it is a secular baptism, as important for social life as is the Sacrament of Baptism for religion. Naturally, then, fairy-belief is represented very strongly. It surrounds the crucial event of birth and its consequences with a hundred necessities of action which carry with them powerful emotional dispositions. Fear, awe, wonder, religious feeling, and plain caution can all be pressed into service to mould the countryman into an acceptance of the new state of affairs; the logic of belief fits these emotions into the countryman's world-view.

The good people are particularly active at such times as this. Every association with birth is infused with power and danger. Even the midwife who attends becomes a magic figure; the aura that surrounds the dangerous and crucial event invests her entire personality. She can command the fairies, disperse their attacks, travel through the air, transfer labour pains at will to a truculent or negligent husband. She is in communication with the fairy powers; in tale and story she often finds her ministrations commandeered by them and her person wafted off into the forts and raths to attend a fairy-woman there. She herself may deny all this; but it

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is true, none the less, in belief. Like all else at birth, she is linked to the good people, and in the linkage an explanation is given for the identity of the emotional associations which surround both her and them.

Similarly, all other crucial changes in social life, as well as those of the religious life, come to fit into the same scheme for many of the country-people who still follow the old tradition. The good people figure in them all.

Thus, First Communion and Confirmation—events of first magnitude in the life of the devout countryman—bring changes in emotional well-being; they bestow a real, if mysterious and holy, strength. This, of course, is first of all a part of religious experience. But the events are also accompanied, in the countryside, by changes in one's relations to one's fellows, in traditional social organization. The child is separated first from others of opposite sex after First Communion; he is introduced to full farm work and, very often, leaves school after Confirmation. His fellows in family and community must henceforward have a new regard for him and treat him differently. So, in these changes, the good people have their role, too. Precautions against their influence reinforce one's dependence upon a symbolic order which incorporates these changes. They make definite and unforgettable the magnitude of the change and the new dispositions which must be learned. Thus,

Again, emotion is enlisted in the fashioning of social habit

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again, emotion is enlisted in the fashioning of social habit.

If we leave aside marriage, where folk-custom and folk-belief are no less important toward the same ends, we can devote our attention to the greatest change of all. Death brings the greatest disturbance in social habit. It shakes emotional equilibrium to its foundation. Yet society must allow for death; it must provide an orderly transition and continuance.

The devout Irishman, of course, finds his greatest consolation in his Catholic Faith. He knows the fate of his loved ones. His religion teaches him how to communicate with them, in the Communion of Saints, through prayer. Faith heals his hurt and it gives him a way of filling the void death creates.

Yet, as I have said, he has room in his heart and mind for the fairy-belief too. Social life must take account of death no less than religion. When death removes one of the human beings to whom he is related as brother, friend or fellow, it leaves behind the traces of sentiment and habit that were once bonds of relationship and association. These must be reformed, and in the reformation a new synthesis between the dead member of the group and the living be found. The countryman resembles us all in this respect; he cannot forget 'the old familiar faces'. He must have an explanation in the world-view of folklore and folk-custom for

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the effect they still exert upon him after they are gone.

So the dead join 'them'. On the border-line between the mundane world and the mysteries of Faith, they find a place in the ranks of the good people, as the misnamed fairies are often called. They are the denizens of rath and fort and hill and cave. There is nothing fundamentally incompatible between this and religious belief, however folklore may escape the control of dogma and sometimes, in its humbler vein, run counter to it. The dead do affect the living, in memory and in tradition. Death is the 'other world' to which we are all advancing. As one fellow could say in a burst of poetic imagery growing out of folk-belief: "The old people in the west room are going down with the sun".

Why not indeed, when we remember that the good people are not always by any means evil and forbidding? They exert their power for both good and evil. They bring reward as well as punishment. The countryman has friends among them as he has friends among men in this world. An Aran woman put the belief for Lady Gregory in words which transport earthly loyalties to the other world. "There's often fighting heard about the house when one is sick. That is what we call the fighting of friends, for we believe it is the friends and enemies of the sick person fighting for him."

Indeed, the same aids that make up habit and

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give base to sentiment in mundane affairs can be projected into the after-world. One must act toward 'them' in death as one acts toward the living; one must do the 'friendly' thing. Thus they can tell a story in Luogh of a man there who they say "was walking along the road and he saw the ghost of his brother. He didn't say anything to it and it walked home with him all in silence. They sat at the fire for a long time, the [living] man waiting for the other to go, so he could go to bed. Finally, the dead man said: 'You have put me to great trouble tonight by not saluting me when we met. I must go now and now I won't be able to defend you in the council in the rath.' And it was true for him, too: the cow that was ailing with the man was taken the next week."

Thus, you see, one can envision 'them' both in mystic terms and in terms sometimes very bald and intimate indeed. The younger people in Luogh still follow the old belief, though they leave its expression to their elders. Yet they could explain the tumour on an old man's head in words which show how near 'the other people' are and how direct is the aid one's friends among them can give:

"Old Seumas was coming along the road drunk and he met a crowd of them on the road and one of them slapped him. If he'd taken the slap he'd be all right but he took off his coat and dared any one of them to stand down to him. They beat him and

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gave him a terrible knock over the poll. One of them that was great friends with him saved him."

Nor are 'they' always fearsome, even in their most wondrous apparitions. The dead are too much a part of life in rural Ireland for that. For the old people they are too near; too many friends have crossed the line between this world and the next.

Thus the dead may come to cover nearly every association of life; in the eyes of some of the old people, the other world of wonders where the 'other people' reign spreads all about them. To the initiate in such mysteries there is nothing to fear. Let me give you my record of one conversation of mine with a very old man of North Clare, a man of clear mind and great folk-learning. His answers to my naïve questions will show you how well he felt, accepted and expressed the symbolic order of the countryside:

I asked what a 'cowl' was. "They are the houses where the family has died out of them. People would live in them if they wasn't too bad, falling down and dirty. You often see old people sitting in them." "What people?" I asked. "The people that used to be in it," he replied. "Do you mean ghosts?" He answered me scornfully: "You might see lights in the cowl and you going along the road at night and you pass people you don't know and you can't tell if they are ghosts or not. Of all the

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people you pass in the town, how would you know what it is they are?"

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Only the young men, like myself, would be frightened by this uncertainty in rural Ireland. For all but the old people, such mysteries are awesome and compelling. Once again, folk-belief fashions itself for a social end. In belief the believers unconsciously agree upon an emotional organization of human relations; folklore expresses once again the organization of the community upon age and upon the past. The old couple who move in among the fairy influences and the symbols of family tradition and sentiment in the west room, the old people in whom rural kinship is centred and through whom sentiment is directed to the mystic past of ancestral blood lineage, the old men and women round whose influence the local community patterns its local life, need not fear greatly the imagery that symbolizes the very place they occupy. Rather they can come to immerse themselves in it. They grow very learned in this lore. They are the ones who sometimes come to manipulate it. They are themselves, sometimes, half fairy. 'Wise men' and 'wise women' are always old. It is no accident that the commonest representation of the fairy power is an old man or woman. They are the initiates in the mysteries of the fairy faith.

In this fact one can see the final synthesis between social habit and belief. Rural kinship organizes men and women in a common orientation

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181 backward and upward toward the dead and the
183 ancestral. The community bestows ever greater
888 status and influence as one progresses further and
776 further toward the age-grade of the old, in whom
775 tradition and precedent are preserved and expressed. In the sphere of credence and emotion the fairy faith acts to the same end and is so designed. The design, in this instance as in all the others, is not conscious; no one has planned it. It is a design drawn from the social order and acting back upon it. Its imagery is traditional, but its efficacy is of the present. And for that reason it lives.

Thus, in the identification between the old, the dead and the influences which affect the goods, the conducts and the values of the countryman's life, the symbolic order is completed. Folk-belief, in the ancient fairy-cult, with its age-old imagery, makes a complete emotional synthesis, overlying and reacting back upon the sentiment and habit out of which it springs again and again with each generation that learns the old way of life. Consequently, each new generation works a change upon it; elements of the synthesis undergo constant re-embellishment and shift of emphasis. Both old and young are controlled by it, but each in a different way. Today the young are sceptical and a little rebellious; they repudiate much of the
[178] older imagery. All that the Church condemns in the 'pisherogues', they also condemn. Today folk-belief is undergoing marked change like all else in this world, like all else in Ireland.

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belief is undergoing marked change like all else in this world, like all else in Ireland.

But that does not mean the death-knell of folklore, as some students of folklore seem to think. Far from that, it means only that a symbolic order like any growth in human life must change and grow onward. New forms and new imagery will grow up to clothe in emotional terms the necessary reformations of habit and sentiment in social life, and new syntheses will fashion new belief, changing the old or supplanting it inch by inch.

One can see this process at work in rural Ireland today. Those who repudiate the fairies repudiate only the outmoded symbols, the outworn images. They do not deny the necessity of a symbolic order in their own lives. The student of man is coming to think today that they could not do so, because no people can. There must always be some socially efficacious organization of the sentiments of social life in the logic of belief and imagery. Belief provides first of all a conception of life; then, and then only, does it carry on to become a conception of the world. But life among men includes emotional attitudes at once very necessary and very satisfying; one can starve the spirit only so far. And for that reason the logic of a social order is not that of science and prose, it is that of emotion. Consequently, those of the countryside who repudiate the older symbols merely demand that their emphasis be shifted. They do not cry out for bald

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178 science, nor abandon symbolism. They merely
183 insist upon new symbols.

There are currently two directions in which the shift can be made. And, as usual, the popular mind has room for both movements; for they are related, and both are compatible with the countryman's social order. The first direction leads more deeply into the greater Faith of the countryman. Religion can come more and more to provide the emotional balances necessary in social life. Thus Catholicism is a growing, spreading force in the countryside, overtaking many an area of the mind where the 'pisherogues' still flourished till recently. The second direction leads to a reaffirmation, in ever stronger form, of that part of belief in which the dead and death are related to the disturbances and the securities of social life. After all, this is one of the indispensable cores of faith, and it expresses most forcefully the organization of life upon tradition and continuities. It can be retained even if the more picturesque imagery must go.

178 It is for that reason that the fairy gives way more
183 and more to the ghost in rural Ireland today. Dead
775 'Tans' now patrol the roads where the banshee may have walked. In stressing the part of the dead in folk-belief, the necessary synthesis between emotional associations and social life can still persist and respond to change and growth. The ghost does his work as well as does the fairy, though he is perhaps less given to poetic dress.

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In the treatment of death, one can see the social system of rural Ireland in the full perspective of its deep-rooted strength. In the flashes of poetic genius which seem so prone to trip from an Irish tongue, death acquires a deeper and more poignant meaning than many another racial tongue could give it. And so it is in the mundane, prosaic world of social life. The most important secular ceremony of rural life is the wake and funeral. In the crowds that come to the wake-house to pay their respects to the dead and condole with the living; in the long lines of marching figures, traps, jaunting cars and motor-cars that make a slow procession over the open roads from wake-house to church and from church to graveside, the observer glimpses an epitome of rural life in which all its values are mingled.

Kinship bonds are at their strongest. Traditional custom enforces upon the kindred important roles in laying out the dead, in carrying the coffin, in digging the grave, in keening him, in reciting funeral laments that are the last survivals of bardic elegies, in preparing entertainment for all comers, in which the dead man's survivors proudly affirm their place and his in the life of the community.

In all this the fairy-lore takes part. The banshee's cry is merely the funeral keen issued from a fairy voice. It signalizes death in the symbolic world just as the keen of the living signalizes living personal loss. It is the lament over common loss in a common cause, for relatives of the dead must greet each other with the keen at the wake-house.

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000 other with the keen at the wake-house.

764 The goods of household and farm suffer incor-
poration into emotional symbolism once more;
183 precautions must be taken to protect them and
181 prevent their going beyond with the lost one. Time
776 and place of death are clothed with a hundred supernatural associations.

The reciprocities which make up friendship and give status in the community get full play. Every man, in death, can command a multitude. To stay away, to make no recognition of the day, is to give deadly affront. Every 'right Irishman' turns and walks, if only a few steps, along with the procession. In towns, all the blinds upon the street are drawn and shop-fronts are boarded, in recognition. In the Gaelic tongue, indeed, one and the same word does service for both funeral and multitude. And in the fairy-lore "there is never a funeral but the other people are at it, too, walking along behind". Many a countryman, steeped in the old lore, sees in a whirlwind or puff of mist a *socraid sidhe* or fairy-funeral.

He knows thereby that somewhere the chief expression of traditional social life is calling the countrymen together through a whole countryside for a re-enactment, both solemn and gay, of their sentiments about their fellows and about their view of life and death and destiny.

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Inis Beag

appears, however, that this argument is usually used as a rationalization for late marriage, when other causal factors are, in reality, responsible—certainly when "considering" covers two or more decades!

The population of Inis Beag has dropped from a high of 532 persons in 1861 (up 76 from the prefamine census a decade earlier) to 497 in 1881, 483 in 1901, 409 in 1926, 376 in 1956, and 350 when my wife and I were there two years later. Today, there is grave concern over the future of the island, and some folk hold that within another generation or two Inis Beag will have gone the way of the Blasket Islands. Although my wife and I isolated almost two dozen causes for the phenomena of late marriage and celibacy, over thirty interrelated causes pertain to emigration (many of those at work in the marital sphere also stimulate emigration). Once again, I will address only the principal causes and stress the role of sexual repression, dealing first with internal factors and then external ones promoting emigration.

Among internal causes, the previously considered inheritance pattern, parents who want to maintain the family status quo for various reasons, and the girls' and young women's increasing dissatisfaction with their lot figure as prominently in the emigration picture as the marital. Some Inis Beag men claim that the reason male youths are leaving the island is economic depression, caused by the collapse of kelp-making and the fishing industry. But this cause is untenable when one examines the increase in government subsidies, remittances from relatives abroad, and taxation and land rental policies; these have far more than made up for the loss of previous revenue. Real income has increased substantially, despite recent inflation, and young men are very much aware of this fact. Just as late marriage has become institutionalized over the past century, so has emigration since the first large-scale migration of islanders in 1822. Emigration is a way of life, which will stimulate some folk to leave in spite of other conditions which might lead an observer to advise their remaining.

By far the most important reason for Inis Beag's long dwindling population is the total cultural impact of sexual puritanism and the secular "excesses" of the clergy. Blanshard writes, "When all the reasons for a flight from Ireland have been mentioned, there still remains a suspicion that Irish young people are leaving their nation largely because it is a poor place in which to be happy and free. Have the priests created a civilization in which the chief values of youth and love are subordinate to Catholic discipline?" (Blanshard 1954: 154). What "remains a suspicion" to Blanshard is fully confirmed by a wealth of data from Inis